What is claimed is:

1. A method of configuring a node for virtual private network operation, comprising providing virtual private network settings to the node in a common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices.

5   2. The method of claim 1, wherein the common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices is universal plug and play.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein providing includes transmitting the settings to the node over a private network.

10   4. The method of claim 3, further comprising transmitting a message from a virtual private network repository node coupled to the private network to the node informing the node that virtual private network settings are available for downloading from the virtual private network repository node.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising requesting download of the 15   virtual private network settings to the node.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising confirming that the requesting node is authorized to operate on the virtual private network.

7. A virtual private network gateway, comprising:
        a communication adaptor coupled to a network; and
20   a processor coupled to the communication adaptor to transmit virtual private network settings to another node coupled to the network in a common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices.

8. The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the network is a private network.

25   9. The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the network is a local area network.

16

10.   The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the network is a wide area network.

11.   The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices includes universal plug and play.

12.   The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the processor is further to transmit a message to the other node informing the other node that virtual private network information is available from the virtual private network gateway.

13.   The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the processor is further to confirm that the other node is authorized to operate on the virtual private network.

14.   A virtual private network gateway, comprising:
       a communication adaptor coupled to a network;
       a processor coupled to the communication adaptor to provide virtual private network settings to another node coupled to the network in a common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices; and
       a storage device coupled to the processor to contain the virtual private network settings.

15.   The virtual private network gateway of claim 14, wherein the processor is to retrieved the virtual private network settings from the storage device and transmit the virtual private network settings to the other node automatically utilizing universal plug and play.

16.   A virtual private network node, comprising:
       a communication adaptor coupled to a network; and
       a processor coupled to the communication adaptor to receive virtual private network settings from another node coupled to the network in a

common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices.

17.   The virtual private network gateway of claim 16, wherein the network is a local area network.

5   18.   The virtual private network gateway of claim 16, wherein the network is a wide area network.

19.   The virtual private network gateway of claim 16, wherein the common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices includes universal plug and play.

10   20.   The virtual private network gateway of claim 16, wherein the processor is further to transmit a message to the other node requesting that virtual private network information be downloaded.

21.   An article of manufacture, comprising:
        a computer readable medium having stored thereon instructions which,
15   when executed by a processor, cause the processor to provide virtual private network settings to a remote node in a common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices.

22.   The article of manufacture of claim 21, wherein the common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices is universal
20   plug and play.

23.   The article of manufacture of claim 21, wherein the settings are transmitted to the node over a private network.

24.   An article of manufacture, comprising:
        a computer readable medium having stored thereon instructions which,
25   when executed by a processor, cause the processor to retrieve virtual private network settings from a remote node in a common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices.

25. The article of manufacture of claim 24, wherein the common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices is universal plug and play.

26. The article of manufacture of claim 24, wherein the settings are
5 transmitted to the node over a private network.